

Additional National Professional Learning INSET days 2019–22

Consultation response form

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Responses should be returned by **1 May 2019** to:

Pedagogy, Professional Learning and Schools as Learning Organisations Branch
Pedagogy, Leadership and Professional Learning
The Education Directorate
Education and Public Services
Welsh Government
Cathays Park
Cardiff
CF10 3NQ

or completed electronically and sent to:

e-mail: IsadranAAaDP.PL&PLDivision@gov.wales

About NEU Cymru

The National Education Union Cymru (NEU Cymru) stands up for the future of education. It brings together the voices of teachers, lecturers, support staff and leaders working in maintained and independent schools and colleges to form the largest education union in Wales.

The National Education Union is affiliated to the Trades Union Congress (TUC), European Trade Union Committee for Education (ETUCE) and Education International (EI). It is not affiliated to any political party and seeks to work constructively with all the main political parties.

Together, we'll shape the future of education.

Our Response

NEU Cymru welcomes the opportunity to respond to the Welsh Government consultation 'Additional National Professional Learning INSET days 2019–22'. NEU Cymru welcome's the Welsh Government's commitment to ensuring that all teachers have the opportunity of focussed Professional Learning to plan for delivering the new curriculum.

Education professionals are highly committed to making a difference in the lives of the children and young people they help learn. Providing education professionals with the practical support to plan and deliver the new curriculum is welcomed. Training should be available to all expected to plan and/ or deliver all aspects of the new Curriculum, including support staff.

We asked for two days per year in additional INSET. Whilst we welcome one day, we believe two is necessary as a minimum for bringing in the new curriculum. Otherwise it

will bring about an increased workload and stress for education professionals and could lead to more time off sick and will have an impact on funding.

Whilst the consultation makes it clear that on these days schools will be closed to pupils, the regulations should make it absolutely explicit that these days come out of the 190 pupil days and not school holidays.

Question 1 – Do you think an additional INSET day is necessary to prepare for the new curriculum?

Agree	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>	Neither agree nor disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Supporting comments

We welcome the Welsh Government’s commitment to providing an additional INSET day specifically to prepare for the new curriculum. For the introduction of the new curriculum to be successful, it is vital that teachers and support staff have enough time in their working days to plan and prepare for delivery.

However, as we specifically asked for two additional INSET days, we’re concerned that one extra day per year for three years isn’t allowing teachers and support staff enough time to fully plan and prepare. Planning for the new curriculum is vitally important, and the work required to ensure it’s ready and fit for purpose is in addition to the current workload that education professionals are faced with.

We would welcome assurances that those education professionals who will be responsible for planning and preparing for the new curriculum will not see an increase in their current workload.

Welsh Government need to provide guidance for Headteachers in relation to the use of the existing five INSET days, which are currently being used for a variety of Professional Learning activities and statutory Professional Learning provision, and the role they could play in the preparations for the new curriculum.

Question 2 – Do you think one additional INSET day per year for three years will be sufficient additional resource to help preparations for the new curriculum?

Agree	<input type="checkbox"/>	Disagree	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Neither agree nor disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Supporting comments

See response to Q1 above. In addition:

Whilst the consultation makes it clear that on these days schools will be closed to pupils, the regulations should make it absolutely explicit that these days come out of the 190 pupil days and not school holidays.

Question 3 – How many years should the additional INSET days be available for?

The additional INSET days should be available until the curriculum has been fully rolled out across all age ranges, up to 2026, as a minimum.

Question 4 – What do you think about how INSET days are currently used?

The existing five INSET days are currently being used for a variety of Professional Learning activities and statutory Professional Learning provision. The first INSET day usually taken by all schools across Wales is the first day of the academic year in September, which is used for a variety of Professional Learning activities by different schools. Three other INSET days are also used as Professional Learning activity days that are arranged by the individual schools and can be designated on whichever dates the Senior Leadership Team feel to be appropriate for the school. The remaining day is organised as a statutory Professional Learning day and some schools arrange this day individually whilst others come together in cluster areas, usually based on Local Authority, with specific Professional Learning topics organised for subjects based on subject/school needs identified during the previous academic year.

Our members have advised us that the content of INSET days varies from school to school, within and across Local Authorities and consortia, and that they can be beneficial when specific training for Professional Development is organised by the school.

If Welsh Government is serious about ensuring that the new curriculum is planned and prepared in the best possible way, then it needs to provide guidance for Headteachers in relation to the use of the existing INSET days and the role they could play in the preparations for the new curriculum and provide at least two additional INSET days per year.

Question 5 – Do you think we should provide mandatory content for these additional days?

Agree	<input type="checkbox"/>	Disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>	Neither agree nor disagree	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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Supporting comments

As mentioned in Chapter 7 of the Successful Futures review ¹, under the sub-heading 'National and local ownership', *"In moving to a higher-performing education system, the message for Wales is for the Welsh Government to set the direction and place trust in the vast majority of schools and teachers to follow that lead in ways that will serve their children and young people well."*

In the same chapter under the sub-heading 'Legislation' it says, *"If the revised curriculum and assessment arrangements are to secure the direct involvement of schools and teachers in taking key decisions about both what and how to teach, then we need to be very clear about the level of detail to be included in legislation. In formulating its recommendations, the Review has sought to strike a balance between enabling teachers to use their professionalism and creativity to respond to the needs of their own children and young people, and ensuring that those aspects of the curriculum deemed to be essential are given legislative force"*. As not all schools are at the same point on the journey of planning and developing the new curriculum, a rigid programme may be set at a point beyond which the school has already gone or which it is far from reaching.

Providing content in the form of guidance and resources the schools can use, provided well in advance as possible, would therefore be useful. Schools can then make the most appropriate plans for their time using the resources and information available and be free to tailor it to their needs.

The Education Secretary announced some welcome funding for schools in November 2018 via the National Approach to Professional Learning (NAPL) ². She invested £9 million in the 2018/19 financial year, which increased to £15 million in this current financial year. The funding is aimed at giving *"schools the time and resources they need to plan ahead for the new curriculum and ensure that changes are made in a way that will*

prioritise the wellbeing of teachers and minimise disruption to pupils' learning. The funding will also help ensure that there is cover for staff to be released for professional learning."

Whilst this funding was welcomed, more should be made available on an annual basis until the curriculum has been fully rolled out across all age ranges, as mentioned in Question 3 above.

Planning for the new curriculum is vitally important, and the work required to ensure it's ready and fit for purpose is in addition to the current workload that education professionals are faced with. More funding will ensure that schools have the time and resources they need to plan for the new curriculum.

1 <https://gweddiill.gov.wales/docs/dcells/publications/150225-successful-futures-en.pdf>

2 <https://gov.wales/kirsty-williams-announces-single-biggest-investment-support-teachers>

Question 6 – Do you think having a specified date for the National Professional Learning INSET day would be beneficial, or do you think a period should be specified (i.e. within a particular term or half-term)?

Agree	<input type="checkbox"/>	Disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>	Neither agree nor disagree	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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Supporting comments

As mentioned in Question 4, the existing five INSET days are currently being used for a variety of Professional Learning activities and statutory Professional Learning provision. Two of those days are to provide statutory Professional Learning provision with the other three days used to provide Professional Learning activities that are arranged by the individual schools and can be designated on whichever dates the Senior Leadership Team feel to be appropriate for the school.

Having a specified date or period for the National Professional Learning INSET day, which falls within the 190 pupil days and not during school holidays, would allow cluster and consortia (Local Authority) schools to work collaboratively in the planning and development of the new curriculum as the same issues would affect the children and young people in those localities. It would also allow schools at the same point on their journeys to come together without excessive prescription. This could help reduce the workload that will be associated with the planning and development of the new curriculum.

We would welcome assurances that those education professionals who will be responsible for planning and preparing for the new curriculum will not see an increase in their current workload.

If Welsh Government is serious about ensuring that the new curriculum is planned and prepared in the best possible way, then it needs to provide guidance for Headteachers in relation to the use of the existing INSET days and the role they could play in the preparations for the new curriculum and provide at least two additional INSET days per year.

Question 7 – We would like to know your views on the effects that the additional National Professional Learning INSET day would have on the Welsh language, specifically on:

- i) opportunities for people to use Welsh
- ii) treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language.

What effects do you think there would be? How could positive effects be increased, or negative effects be mitigated?

Supporting comments

Welsh Government will provide the resources necessary to allow schools to plan and prepare for the new curriculum. Welsh medium and bilingual schools can therefore plan and prepare for the new curriculum in their chosen language(s) and this will ensure that Welsh is treated no less favourably than English. However, more resources are needed to train the current workforce.

Question 8 – Please also explain how you believe the proposed policy of an additional National Professional Learning INSET day could be formulated or changed so as to have:

- i) positive effects or increased positive effects on opportunities for people to use the Welsh language and on treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language
- ii) no adverse effects on opportunities for people to use the Welsh language and on treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language.

Supporting comments

See Question 7.

Question 9 – We have asked a number of specific questions. If you have any related issues which we have not specifically addressed, please use this space to report them.

Further consideration should be given to the actual length of the moratorium of Estyn inspections. There is a considerable amount to work to be undertaken to implement and develop the new curriculum which should not be jeopardised by excessive inspections.

Responses to consultations are likely to be made public, on the internet or in a report. If you would prefer your response to remain anonymous, please tick here: